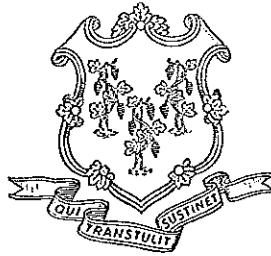


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Education Committee  
March 2, 2015  
LOB 2C 10:30 AM

In SUPPORT of Raised Senate Bill 317  
An Act Concerning Dyslexia

Chairwoman Slossberg, Chairman Fleischmann, and distinguished members of the Education Committee, thank you for hearing SB 317. I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 317, *An Act Concerning Dyslexia* with modifications.

Dyslexia is an invisible problem, yet it is the most common learning disability among our state's students. In fact, one out of five people may have dyslexia. As many of you know, dyslexia is a learning disability that impedes a person's ability to read, write, and spell. Students with dyslexia face numerous challenges, including difficulties with word recognition, reading fluency, spelling and writing skills. However, as research has shown, this learning disability affects every student differently. For example, students who have less severe symptoms early in their education may be passed through the education system until they experience much greater difficulties later in their education when the issue is more difficult to address.

Senate Bill 317 starts to address that problem. SB 317 would build on the existing requirements which are not robust enough, by calling for "any person applying for a remedial reading, remedial language arts or reading consultant endorsement to complete a course on the detection and recognition of, and evidence-based structured literacy interventions for, students with dyslexia, as defined in section 10-3d." I believe this area should be expanded to more than a single course. This is a critical issue for many children in our state and could have an enormous positive impact. By equipping our educators with the skills necessary to detect dyslexia early, providing training to identify less salient triggers and presentations of dyslexia, we will be able to identify children early, get them the remedial attention they need, and set them up for a successful education moving forward.

Without SB 317, we set both our teachers and our kids up to fail. If our educators don't have the skills to identify children with dyslexia, too many kids will continue to slip through the cracks. We know that the longer children participate in school without a diagnosis, the more likely it is those children will suffer long term detrimental consequences not only to their education, but to their overall health and well-being. Too many young lives are at stake. For these reasons, I urge your support of SB 317 with modifications. In addition, these changes will be cost neutral as earlier detection saves in more expensive long term costs.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 317. And I look forward to working with the leadership and members of this committee on this bill's passage.